(b) the method of delegating the funds out of this corpus; and

(c) the annual collection under the Education Cess during the last three years and the details of annual disbursal of funds out of Education Cess?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) The Education Cess is levied as per provisions of Finance (No. 2) Act, 2004 to provide and finance universalized quality basic education.

(b) The proceeds of the Education Cess are credited into a non lapsable fund called Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh. The amounts in the Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh are being utilized for (a) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and (b) Mid-day Meal Scheme each year after exhausting the Gross Budgetary Support allocated by the Planning Commission for these schemes.

(c) The details of annual collection under the Education Cess during the last three years and annual disbursal of funds out of Education Cess are given in the Statement.

Statement

Details of collection of Education Cess during the last three years

(Rs. in crore)

Year	Direct Taxes	Indirect Taxes
2005-2006	3307.32	3827
2006-2007	4554.26	4642
2007-2008	5606.04 (Apr-Dec)	3646 (Apr 07-Jan 08)

Figures are provisional

Details of disbursal of funds out of the Education Cess

(Rs. in crore)

Year	Major Head	SSA	MDM	Total
2005-2006	**	**	**	**
2006-2007		5830.67	2911.00	8741.67
2007-2008		7547.36 (as on 30.3.08)	2369.80 (as on 30.3.08)	9917.16

** Since the Scheme regarding Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh, in which the proceeds of education cess are credited, became operational in 2006-07 only, no expenditure from the proceeds of Education Cess was booked on SSA and MDM prior to 2006-07.

Hiking of credit and loan limits

3757. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of pitiable plight of farmers in the country, Government has decided to raise the credit/loan limits, during the current fiscal year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the banks and financial institutions have been given directions to provide sufficient credit to farmers; and

(d) if so, the details thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) The target for flow of credit to agriculture has been substantially increased continuously since 2004-05. The target for flow of credit to agriculture, which was Rs. 2,25,000 crore in 2007-08, has been increased to Rs. 2,80,000 crore for the year 2008-09 and the banking institutions have been directed to achieve this target.

The Government of India (GoI) has taken the following steps to ensure availability of timely and affordable credit for farm sector:—

- After implementation of the debt waiver and debt relief scheme for farmers, the farmer would be entitled to fresh agricultural loans from the banks.
- GoI is providing interest subvention @ 2% per annum to Public Sector Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Cooperative Banks on their own funds and concessional refinance to Cooperative Banks and RRBs since Kharif 2006-07 to ensure Short Term crop loans upto Rs. 3 lakh to famers at interest rate of @ 7% per annum at the ground level.
- Commercial Banks and Regional Rural Banks have been successful in financing more than 75 lakhs new farmers during each of the last three years.
- Banks have simplified the procedure for documentation for agricultural loans.
- Loans upto Rs. 50,000/- have been made collateral and margin free and the requirement of 'No Dues Certificate' has been dispensed with.
- Banks have been advised to provide all eligible farmers with Kisan Credit Cards.
- Banks have been instructed to achieve financial outreach through provision of a General Credit Card to households, to open "No Frills" accounts with limited overdraft facilities, to extend financial outreach by utilizing services of Civil Society Organisation like Farmers Clubs, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Post Offices as Business Facilitator/Business Correspondent Model, etc.

Negative growth in small savings schemes

3758. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:
SHRI MOHAMMED AMIN:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that small savings schemes have seen a negative growth in the year 2007-08;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action being taken by Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) Yes, Sir. During April 2007-February 2008 the withdrawals (including